

Palace Hotel
(Now St. Regis Hotel)
516 North Clark Street;
southwest corner of North Clark
Street and West Grand Avenue
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1057

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
59-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1057

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Location: 516 North Clark Street; southwest corner of North Clark Street, and West Grand Avenue; Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: Francis Anderson, Chicago.

Present Occupant and Use: St. Regis Hotel.

Statement of Significance: The structure, a typical hotel building of the era, is similar to many buildings on Chicago's Near North Side that were constructed shortly after the Fire of 1871.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: Sublots 1-5 (Lots 15 and 16) in Assessors' Division of Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11 in Block 11 of Wolcott's Addition to Chicago (Antefire).

The following is an abstract of the chain of title contained in Book 457, pp. 289-294, in the Cook County Recorder's Office: The property appears to have been owned by George H. Thiessing et al., as of May 1, 1882 (Document 2289C). On April 29, 1873 the apparent owner, Frederick Heide, granted a party wall agreement for a wall between the south one-third and north two-thirds of Lots 15 and 16, 55', to Michel L. Weber (Document 476804, recorded June 20, 1883). On August 21, 1889, the first mention of any hotel names Hugh T. Dickey and the Palace Hotel Co. et al. as parties engaged in a law suit. Included in the inventory of James M. Gamble, dated June 30, 1890, is his interest in the Palace Hotel (Document 66/42). On June 11, 1891, M. L. Wachs was engaged in legal action against the Grand Palace Hotel (Document 3429). On June 13, 1917, the Lott Hotel Co. is mentioned in the record of a lease agreement with the Lake and State Savings Bank (Document 6132087). Francis Anderson et al. purchased the property from Carnelia D. Douglas on December 27, 1944 (Document 13421271), and appears to be the present owner as of the last entry dated January 5, 1960 (Document 17748913).

2. Date of erection: c. 1875
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.:

There is no record of the original building permit.

Randall, Frank A. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949. p. 86:

"Built ca. 1875; six stories and one basement high, on spread foundations. The north corner portion, 54 feet by 80 feet, was known formerly as The Albany."

From an examination of the exterior building fabric, fenestration, and ornament, it would appear that the present structure is the result of several additions. The south three, six-story bays are distinctly one building, perhaps added later. The north five bays, up to the fourth story, are probably the original building, upon which two additional stories were added. Thus, the present building is composed of eight irregularly spaced bays, all six stories in height and united by a continuous cornice.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

A thorough check of the names of those associated with the building in the chain of title, and the various names by which the hotel has been known, has not revealed any information on, or history associated with the structure. The hotel seems to have missed any significant involvement with the local affairs and prominent people.

C. Bibliography:

Randall, Frank A. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949.

See also HABS report on the Malcom Building (HABS No. ILL-1050), 662 North Clark Street; at West Erie, Chicago, for similar anonymous architecture and source material.

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka
Historian
National Park Service
September, 1964

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An example of early Chicago hotel architecture, completed shortly after the fire of 1871.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor, part of the exterior has been extensively painted and is peeling quite badly. Unpainted exterior has not been maintained; interior is not maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 80' x 100'. Six stories and basement. Eight bays on east (North Clark Street) front; south three equal, and north five have 2-1-2-1-2 rhythm (beginning with the fourth story - which was probably the top story of the original building - the narrow bays have two windows below a single hood-mould.) Bays on north (West Grand Avenue) side have 2-3-2-3-2 rhythm.
2. Layout, shape: U-shaped with light well open to the west.
3. Foundations: Stone masonry on spread footings.
4. Wall construction: Grey painted limestone above first floor on east front, and one bay of north side. Remainder of north side is grey painted brick. First floor is a very light colored terra-cotta. A belt course occurs at each floor, but is broken by piers and pier capitals at each floor. The south side of north leg or "U" is stucco.
5. Chimneys: One is centered on west wall of south leg of "U", and one is located on the west wall near the southwest corner of north leg of "U".
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Remodeled entrance to hotel on east front. Shop entrances on the east appear to be original, or replaced to match original.
 - b. Windows: The south three projecting bays have one-over-one-light double-hung windows. Remaining bays have one-over-one- and two-over-four-light double-hung windows which establish the syncopated rhythm of the facade. The window heads and lintels are consistent horizontally, but vary greatly from floor to floor.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat, built-up.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Large projecting stone cornice on east side and north side with stone brackets placed in line with piers of each bay.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Now used for storage and mechanical equipment.
- b. First floors: Shops, hotel lobby and restaurant.
- c. Second through sixth floors: All are used as hotel rooms.

2. Stairways:

- a. Elevator: One in center of building off hotel lobby.
- b. Stair wells: One stair next to elevator on north side, and one at west end of north leg of "U".

3. Flooring: Wooden floors with carpets in hotel rooms and corridors.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted throughout.

5. Doorways and Doors: Original four-panel wooden doors with transoms over (doors have one panel located in each quadrant of the door).

6. Trim: The original counter in the hotel lobby has a wooden front with a white marble top. The white marble wainscot in the lobby is painted to look like wood.

7. Lighting: Electrical.

8. Heating: Central.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building is oriented to the east on Clark Street, occupying the southwest corner of North Clark Street and West Grand Avenue. Many buildings in

the badly deteriorated area are now unoccupied and subject to vandalism.

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August, 1964